

# Okolona Messenger

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## TO ABOLISH THE CANAL COMMISSION.

THE president, says the Philadelphia Inquirer, has decided to abolish the Panama Isthmian canal commission and to place the work in the entire charge of Chief Engineer Wallace, who is to have the assistance of an advisory board of three ex-part engineers, but who is to exercise plenary powers in the direction of the great enterprise, subject only to the authority and supervision of the president.

That is the latest news upon this important subject, and it is welcome. It might have been foreseen that a commission of seven members would not be able to make rapid progress, and this circumstance has been abundantly demonstrated by the experience of the past twelve months. The commission consisted of men of high character and distinguished ability, who have no doubt done the best they could, but it is impossible for so many men, and especially for so many able and distinguished men, to get along without more or less friction, and it is a fact that the results of their efforts has been disappointing. It has disappointed the president and has disappointed the public, which sees the canal constructed as rapidly as possible and which finds it difficult to understand why the United States government, which practically has unlimited resources, should not make a better showing.

It expects impossibilities. To cut a ship through the Panama isthmus is a gigantic undertaking which must occupy considerable time, and the rapidity of its accomplishment is very far from altogether a question of the number of men employed to keep effectively at work, there is no imaginable reason why that number should not be almost indefinitely increased. Of course there is a limit to the force that can be maintained within a certain extent of territory, but it has not been even nearly reached.

Engineer Wallace, when invested with full authority, may be trusted to employ the most effective means to produce the desired result, but common sense suggests the desirability of proceeding along the usual course. It is the policy of contractors when they get a big job that they contract to do as considerable extent of work as possible under the most favorable circumstances may render desirable and in this way secure the co-operation of efficient assistants who have a personal interest in doing their work and doing it right.

Way to get the Panama canal built with a minimum of delay is to engage an army of contractors, and that is the plan with Chief Engineer Wallace. He may be expected to work which the government does for itself is nearly always a long time doing.

One of the big things in Wall street, New York, is the Board Exchange building. It is twenty-eight stories high and houses 8,000 brokers, bankers and corporation officers and corporation officers. It has come to light that the designer of every inch of structural steel work from the foundation to the top was a woman—Miss Marian S. Parker, a civil engineer. In addition to this Miss Parker has designed the steel work of the Astoria half of the hotel. The whitehall building is another of her lower Broadway, and a score of other big structures she has designed. She calls herself a specializing architect. Miss Parker is a native of Detroit and a graduate of Ann Arbor.

Two historic names appear in curious proximity on Spring street, near MacDougal, New York. Over a restaurant window is a sign bearing the name Aaron Burr, almost directly opposite the inscription, "Alexander Hamilton, carpenter and builder." What makes their proximity still more interesting is the fact that the entrance to Aaron Burr's country place, Richmond Hill, was, years ago just above where the intersection of spring and MacDougal streets is now, a short distance from the signs still bearing the two historic names. Burr is said to have passed out of this gate on that fatal morning when he went to Weehawken heights to fight his memorable duel with Hamilton.

Postmaster General Cortelyou is one of the finest mature pianists in the country. Indeed at one period of his life he seriously considered making music his profession. Whenever the cares of his office have proved unusually heavy he goes to his den and sits down at the piano in the dark. Mrs. Cortelyou knows when he is beginning to forget his official troubles, for then he ceases the minor strains with which he always begins and passes to more lively music generally finishing with a triumphant march. Mr. Cortelyou finds the same stimulus and refreshment in music that other men find in drink, drugs or long walks.

One of the leading commercial magnates in New York said the other day: "Every month there is poured into Wall street brokers' offices \$30,000,000 by the people throughout the country who are anxious to pick up a little something for nothing on a quick gamble. Of this vast sum more than 90 per cent clings to the brokers' fingers, and the rest dribbles back to the investing suckers, only to be sent to the street again with an additional supply. The public not only takes they are always in—but possibly not always up to their neck."

## How People Like to be Gulled!

WILL THEY NEVER LEARN SELF-PRESERVATION?



THE submissiveness of the average citizen to the powers that be is one of the peculiarities of human nature most difficult to understand. Perhaps this does not just express the thought, but it is a step in that direction.

How often, when a man is elected to a high office the public immediately discover in him virtues and noble qualities which were never before attributed to him, nor in fact ever a part of his make-up. The same rule applies to men who get up in the world in the various departments of business. Some man who has either inherited or in some other manner come into a considerable portion of wealth starts a bank in a community, and the public carry to his vault and hand over to his keeping without interest and without security all their surplus, which he is enabled to loan back to them at the highest rate of interest the law will permit him to exact, and it is not long until he is by common consent the moderator of the community. That is he knows every man's business, makes it a point to assume a sort of advisorship over all who furnish him their surplus to loan, as he puts it, for safe keeping, and soon he becomes, in his own mind, as well as in the judgment of a goodly portion of his patrons, the king of the community. No business man thinks of leading out in an enterprise without consulting him and securing his approval. If such an individual is a level headed man, and public spirited and liberal in those things which tend to the advancement of the material and social interests of the community, it is not so bad, but if he is intensely selfish, avaricious, unprincipled, sooner or later many find that he is the greatest menace the community can foster, and many a good man pays the penalty of his folly for having been deceived by him and the custom which makes his business a sure winner.

Another young man reads law, secures a license to practice, sometimes by scheming through his examination, and puts out his shingle as a lawyer. In a short time, if not immediately, he is able to impress those who surround him that he is really made off a different kind of material than were most of his boyhood associates, even though he may have been the dullest in his class, or the most indifferent in aspiring to meet the hopes of his parents. People in trouble naturally go to him, and if he is honest and trustworthy, he may develop into a worthy citizen. Certainly his chosen profession is one of the highest. But how many times, he rather uses his position to prey upon the community, and in his adroitness, which his profession naturally develops, is enabled to make all fear if they do not respect him. Many of course enter this profession, some of whom through a pull of some sort or other attain to high positions only to finally lose them when the day comes that they must stand upon their capabilities rather than the pull which gave them promotion. As a matter of fact the real, studious lawyer, who made his own way, and merited more distinction than he enjoyed, is almost out of date. The trend of the day is to get under the guardian wing of some corporation and just pose. Good physical looks and heavy gall is the principal requisite among this latter class. And yet the people are weak enough to seek and listen to the counsel of such designing leeches upon society, in every community where they are fostered.

One of these so-called lawyers, who finds he cannot handle the law, and thinks he ought to get into politics and make laws; a preacher of similar ability and want of genuine knowledge, who barely is able to hold a small station at a meagre salary, as a spiritual advisor, or some one who has been granted a certificate to teach school as a stepping stone to something better, conceives the idea that his community is much in need of a bright, ably edited newspaper, a sort of political encyclopedia, and moral guide. He schemes around until he gets hold of a few type and an old press. Then the great illuminator makes its first appearance. About its first notice, or rather about the first thing in its columns that attracts any notice in the community is a beastly assault upon some citizen who has not seemed to appreciate the genius and capabilities of this new editor. Wholly ignorant of literature, the types or the sciences of government, this new editor

strikes out to regulate the entire universe, offering his opinion in opposition to all the scholars that have lived and all the statesmen that have died. What he requires, however, in ability and learning he makes up in cheek and brazen effrontery, and in time he becomes the recognized dictator of the little community where he resides. If he is not content with this and aspires to fields larger and broader to conquer, his neighbors meet and resolute on his genius, and bid him farewell. He departs and the next beard of him he is broke and coming back to live off his wife's people. But he had his day of deceiving the people he elected to enlighten, though he was as ignorant as a steer himself.

But all this is supplemental if not entirely foreign to the subject intended to be discussed in this article. The thought paramount is that the people of this entire land, seem never to realize that it is themselves and not the great combinations of which they are constantly complaining, who are to blame for many of the abuses that are endured.

One of the most inconceivable things with which the country comes in contact today is the ready manner in which the great corporations and combines of capital, whose managers seem to feel they have a right not only to the earth but to all that is thereon as well, can weave their silken webs about the masses in such way as to hold their sway despite the inconsistencies of the demands. In other words, no matter how resolutely the people may become to curb a growing evil or abuse at the hands of corporate concerns, how strong the laws may be made or how righteous may be the demands, it seems, when needs be, that the representatives of these gigantic interests, always selfish and never considerate of personal rights in conflict with them, they are able to so mould public sentiment as to carry their point, or at least get the masses on their side of a question at issue.

A case in point is presented just now by some of our neighbors over in Pontotoc county. For a number of years Pontotoc has had operated to their town, from the north, under a charter granted by the state, a jerk water railroad known as a narrow gauge. It was a little better than no railroad, and the people were content enough with it until it was bought by a modern company and made over into a standard road and its extension toward the South undertaken. Pontotoc had a railroad and was happy, for her people could assemble about the depot once a day and see the cars come in.

Under the new order, however, also came sorrow. The new company concluded that Pontotoc was a slow old town, and that if they wished, it would probably be just as well to change the line of road, as they claimed by straightening it, and leave the old town three miles from the depot. By buying up the land quietly in the vicinity where the new depot was to be erected, the plan to build a new town and cut out Pontotoc from railroad service was well laid by the speculators working under the railroad company.

But these people who thought the undertaking would be so easily accomplished, seem to have overlooked the fact that the constitution of the state of Mississippi might put a stop to their well laid plan. There is a provision in the constitution which says that when a railroad runs within three miles of a county seat, it must run through the town. Pontotoc is the county seat, and here the schemers find themselves against a stone wall.

The new line of road has been constructed and all arrangements made for the depot, when the people of Pontotoc awoke and filed a protest before the railroad commission.

The railroad schemers know their business. They have schemed before. True to the system adopted by the great combines of the country, they realized soon that in order to have the slightest chance of maintaining their position, their first move must be to mould public sentiment in their favor, and they soon had at work, all through Pontotoc county, and even a few in the town, local missionaries whispering how impossible it would be for the new line to change its course and pass through Pontotoc. The people were soon shown that to defy the plans of the railroad would mean probably losing the road entirely, and the outlet to the south which was so much desired.

Prominent farmers who buy and ship stock, were

daily in the saddle riding about among their neighbors telling them how much better prices could be secured for everything they had to sell, if the opposition to the plan of the railroad company should be routed. Gradually the community became convinced that there was but one way to do and that was to let the railroad do as it pleased, no matter how many laws or constitutions were violated, or how much damage might be wrought to the people of Pontotoc.

By the time the case before the railroad commission came on for hearing practically every influential man in the country was on hand ready to fight for the isolation of their county seat town from the road. The Pontotoc protestants, by the way, did not get to Jackson, where the commission was in session, until after or just about the time the decision was rendered.

But the schemers did not win, for there was a gentleman on the railroad commission from this district, who somehow believes that his oath of office suggests that he shall support the constitution of the state, and when he was appealed to, to ride over it, Mr. J. C. Kincannon said to the other members of the commission that, though every resident of the county asked him to disregard the fundamental law of his state, he could not do it.

The result is that the scheming railroad company, or those of its construction clan, who have been seeking to "straighten the line" and run by Pontotoc, the county seat, leaving it about three miles from the road, find themselves against the real thing.

The new road is being constructed under the old charter, which provided for the depot of the narrow gauge at Pontotoc, and the chances are that some of the big money contemplated in the near future from the sale of lots, by reason of the change, will be a long time maturing.

But the thought, aside from the compliment we would pay to Commissioner Kincannon for his determined stand against a manufactured sentiment which covers multitudes of his political friends, is that seemingly a whole people can be so easily duped into standing for really the very thing they do not want, simply because a few who want to profit by the change, adroitly slip up close to them with a handsomely constructed story of how essential it is to give the railroad company everything it asks for, whether it be legal or otherwise to do so.

With the exception of fresh milk, no article of food is so sensitive to surrounding influences as tea. It quickly absorbs flavor, odor and color from other substances. Its order is altered in manufacture by close contact with such odoriferous perfumes as flowers of orange, jessamine and especially the fragrant olive. Housekeepers should be careful to keep tea in sealed jars and away from the ordinary odors of the kitchen if they would have the best results.

General Nogi and General Kuroki are members of the Presbyterian church. Field Marshal Oyama's wife is also a member in good standing of that denomination. Admiral Togo is a Roman Catholic. Other instances of high Japanese officials being Christians might be noted. No country in the world possesses today a larger measure of religious liberty than does Japan. That is one of the secrets of her success and progress during these latter years.

A St. Louis millionaire philanthropist declares that getting rich is a bad habit. Those who have acquired the habit are as scarce as hen's teeth, however.

Bojastvensky announces that he is ready for battle with the Japs. Paid up his life insurance dues and made his will, eh?

It is estimated that two-thirds of the adult male population of the world uses tobacco in some form or other—mostly other.

Lily Langtry is a grandma, but she will never mind it when she thinks how long ago Sara Bernhardt became a grandma.

"In the spring the maiden's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of new shirt waists," says the Boston Globe. And to thoughts of a new shirt-waist man.

If Secretary Hay leaves the cabinet President Roosevelt's "very own" administration will indeed be thrown on its own resources.

Addicks says he will not consider from the administration. They money in a dime museum.

The emperor's demand for an